Memorandum

To: Ms. Tamura Magwood, Principal

CC: Mr. John Spurlock, Assistant Principal

From: Ms. Deidre E. Paris, Math Teacher

Date: 7/31/2017

Re: Informational Meeting to discuss converting ECM into a charter STEM school

Data on students’ achievement here at East Columbus Magnet (ECM) School shows that our students are lagging behind in math and science. It is important that our students are prepared for a workforce that requires proficiency in both math and science. According to the United States Department of Commerce, the growth of STEM-related jobs (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) over the last 10 years was three times that of non-STEM fields. Many schools throughout the nation are converting schools into charter STEM schools to educate students to meet these growing demands. Charter schools are publicly funded schools established by teachers, parents, or community groups with a local or national authority. Studies have shown that children exposed to STEM educational resources at a young age perform better in science and math. Furthermore, adapting a STEM curriculum increases the likelihood that a student will pursuit a STEM career, and thus increases their earning potential upon entering the workforce. ECM students need to be a part of this epidemic, and I will like to propose that East Columbus Magnet sponsors an informational meeting to discuss and educate teachers, parents, and community leaders on the benefits of converting East Columbus Magnet into a charter STEM School. These meetings are extremely important and highly needed to identify a group of committed individuals and form a cohesive group before we meet with the local school district and submit a letter of intent to the school district.

This informational meeting will inform parents, students, and teachers about how converting East Columbus Magnet into a STEM charter school nicely aligns with our current mission which is *to help students find, explore, and build their gifts and talents through academics.* The Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) also has a certification program for STEM and becoming a charter STEM school will help our school align also with GADOE’s STEM initiatives and we can leverage funding resources from both entities, state and local government, which will help us enrich our students so they will be prepared for the technological advances that awaits them as they go to college and pursue their professional career.

As a charter school, East Columbus will have the funding and resources that will allow teachers the ability to enrich our students learning by giving them exposure to programs like robotics, 3-D printing, and engineering summer camps. Teachers at East Columbus will also have an opportunity to use more innovative approaches in teaching students instead of having to adhere to the districts’ pacing guide and strict standards but can incorporate proven innovative teaching methods and hands-on teaching strategies. I believe that we will get buy in from many stakeholders because this will be **the only STEM middle school in Columbus**, the **school will be publicly funded**, and most importantly, **students don’t have to pay to attend our chartered school**. Free tuition will especially be attractive to parents since the majority of our students are low income! However, some parents that attend the meeting might feel that converting ECM into a charter school will not enroll district school students. We will let them know upfront that converting ECM into a charter school adopts and maintains a policy giving admission preference to pupils who reside within the former attendance ECM area. Additional preference for students currently attending an existing public school and those living within the ECM school boundaries can also be given preference. We will discuss other benefits of converting ECM into a charter school which includes the following:

* Parents, students, teachers and other stakeholders have an active voice in

school governance.

* School leaders can develop a robust professional development program,

increase teacher support and effectiveness and make informed personnel decisions.

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* Teachers and staff have the freedom to develop and implement innovative instructional programs tailored to the needs of their students.
* The Board of Directors has the ability to make critical governance decisions at the

school site level.

I recommend that we hold the informational sessions in the schools’ cafeteria four times during the summer on the 2nd the 4th Saturday from 11am –12:30 pm during the months of June and July. We will provide lunch for attendees which will include subway sandwiches, chips, and sweet tea. We will serve lunch at noon , and we will pass out a survey which will solicit attendees’ feelings about the conversion will also be administered. While the participants are eating, I and another school official (principal or assistant principal) will answer any questions and address any concerns. The informational meetings will be advertised in the Ledger and on the local news. Parents of the students who attend EMC will receive a letter in the mail. Interested participants must call the school’s office to reserve a seat. Participants must show valid identification before entering the meeting, and can only attend one informational session. The maximum number of participants for each informational session is 100. Two local police officers will be in attendance at each meeting for protection. I am also requesting $800 dollars for the cost of the food and supplies. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at paris\_deidre@columbusstate.edu.